AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace paragraph 0004 on page 1 with the following:

In addition to radial forces acting on the sides of a container, the ~~contain~~ container must also resist axial top load forces that act to compress a container. These forces arise at a variety of stages during the manufacture, filling, storage, shipping and display of containers for sales to consumers. For example, after initial manufacture, bottles may be stacked and stored. Although individual bottles are relatively lightweight, the weight of multiple stacks of filled bottles, as typically stored in a warehouse, is large, placing significant pressure or bottles at or near the bottom of the stack. Top load forces also arise during capping operations. During capping, the bottle must resist not only collapse, but also deflection of the neck ~~to~~ as the cap is applied. If the neck deflects during the capping operation, the cap will not be properly applied, leaving an opening. This results not only in scrap bottle material, but also in wasted product.

Please replace paragraph 0005 on page 2 with the following:

Systems used to transport containers during the manufacturing process frequently lift the container at the neck using a fork-like apparatus. In order to be lifted or transported by the apparatus, the container is manufactured with a flange, also called a transfer bead, located in the neck portion of the container. Because of material flow properties the flange cannot be manufactured as a solid projection without an unacceptable increase in gram weight. Rather, such flanges are typically formed as a hollow outwardly projecting "V", thus having an appearance similar to a single fold of an accordion or bellows. When topload pressures are applied to such a structure, for example during capping operations, the flange tends to fold, which results in a deflection that can lead to misapplication of the cap. This becomes even problematic during hot-fill processing. To overcome this problem, prior art solutions have included the use of larger amounts of material. However, increases in amounts of material, i.e. increases in "gram weight," are undesirable; lightweighting of containers without a deterioration of physical properties can give a manufacturer a significant competitive advantage. Thus, increases in gram weight ~~this~~ ~~results~~ may result in unacceptable increases in cost ~~that can be unacceptable~~.

Please replace paragraph 0007 on page 2 with the following:

There has also been some focus on the modification of the dome or bell portion of a container to improve top load resistance in that area. There has been less focus on strengthening of the neck portion of containers to improve top load resistance. However, as efforts continue to further ~~light~~ reduce the weight of containers ~~continue~~, the thinning of walls in the neck can become an important design concern.

Please replace paragraph 0010 on page 3 with the following:

A container can include the neck described above, together with a transition region extending from the neck portion to a tubular container sidewall portion and a base portion below the container sidewall portion. The ~~container~~ container sidewall can be made up of four substantially planar panels wherein opposite planar panels are substantially parallel, thus forming a rectangular or square shape. The container sidewall can also include an arcuate panel connecting two adjacent planar panels. An inset can be present between two adjacent planar panels; for example, in an arcuate panels. Further, additional insets may be present, for example two insets on located diagonally from on another. The container can be adopted for hot fill processing.

Please insert the following after paragraph 0017 on page 4:

FIG. 6 illustrates a plastic container that includes a container neck portion including linear undulations according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

Please replace paragraph 0025 on pages 6-7 with the following:

It is believed that the undulations 222 defined by the peaks 202 and the valleys 204 in the top surface of the flange 214 support the neck portion 108 by acting as buttresses joining the flange to the upper vertical sidewall 212. The presence of a ledge 206 that extends beyond the surface undulations 222 can bolster this buttressing effect. Although the buttresses are depicted herein as arcuate, rounded structures, the same advantages can be achieved by other shapes. For

example, as shown in FIG. 6, the undulations 222 have more linear sides, i.e., creating substantially triangular projections. Further, the undulations 222 depicted herein as being connected to form a substantially continuous structure, so that the point of contact between the upper vertical sidewall 212 and the undulations 222 can be traced to form a sinusoidal wave around the neck of the container. However, the valleys 204 can be formed such that the undulations 222 are discontinuous or unconnected so that the flange 214 has flat portions in between the base of two adjacent undulations 222.

Please replace paragraph 0027 on page 7 with the following:

FIGS. 3, 4 and 5 are perspective, top and bottom views, respectively of the container 100 according to the exemplary embodiment of the invention depicted in FIG. 1. The neck portion 108 of this exemplary embodiment is substantially cylindrical, whereas the container sidewall portion 104 is rectangular or square. Further, the circumference of the cylinder forming the neck portion 108 differs in size from the periphery of the container sidewall 104. As a result, the transition region 106 accommodates both a change in shape and a change ~~is~~ in size. The transition region in the illustrated embodiment includes an upper shoulder 302, a lower shoulder 304 and a waist 306 disposed between them. The present invention is not limited to this structure for the transition region; any suitable configuration can be used.